

Tourist's Perfect Handbook

The traveler whose goal happens to be adventure is advised to keep in mind at all times the Golden Rule that manners make the gentleman—as well as the lady

An Article by

HILAIRE DU BERRIER

It is a pitiful sight for a man who has wandered all over the earth's face and suddenly finds his wings clipped for lack of mobility—i.e. a ticket—to sit back and watch the way young men of today who have a windfall are squandering it to educate themselves for filling stations we will never have enough of for all of them to fill.

There is a big world out there, where, if a lad knows where to go, he won't do any worse than he is likely to back here in the next ten years, and where, if he is taught how to conduct himself particularly, this drivel about every American boy being an ambassador of good will and cordial relations might really mean something.

Perhaps the main reason the young American has come home now to graduate from a football mill instead of sallying forth to "teach him other tongues and in strange eyes to make him not a stranger" in remote ports is because of the complete inadequacy of his home training to fit him for success among other people than his own.

Naturally the young American is sadly in need of a good practical course in etiquette such as no one, even or particularly his parents, has ever bothered to give him.

His handbook might start with pointers to be remembered:

Bear in mind Pliny the elder's observation, before his untimely demise in the eruption of Vesuvius, "All peoples have strange customs," and in consequence temper your conduct with the knowledge that if you go to Hong Kong it is advisable to maintain an icy reserve just bordering on insolence, otherwise the inhabitants of that crown colony will think *you* weren't anything before you came there either.

To command respect in any country it is well to notice what manner of man is re-

spected there. "A man of wit," Gil Blas observed of Núñez the poet, "can easily turn himself into all shapes."

In Canton you will shout "Gam bei!" empty your glass every time your host does, eat everything, have a good time, pat your stomach contentedly and murmur "Sik bow!" (belly full), when you get through, and all the social amenities will have been observed.

Liberty, pure and unalloyed, may be found in the little Portuguese colony of Macéu, only a few hours from Hong Kong. Here the harassed modern may check in a hotel without so much as a toothbrush, play fan-tan in the lobby, order opium or a singsong girl from the desk, and place race bets with the switchboard operator.

In Singapore be suave, urbane, soft-spoken, but do not let your host's airs deceive you. As a lower-middle-class Britisher newly become an upper-class colonial, all things being relative, he is a parvenu and you are doing him a favor by drinking his gimlets (one-fourth gin, a bit of sweetened lime juice, a piece of lemon peel and the rest water). Never let any qualms at being his debtor affect your pose, because that will ruin his pleasure in having you there.

Among Arabs, if you meet any, it is advisable to refrain from discussing pigs, dogs, or women.

Should an Ethiopian chieftain honor you with his hospitality and push gently into your mouth a ball made with his fingers out of their staple dish, Habesh-Wott, if you are graced with any breeding at all you will return the compliment as a manifestation that

the good will and esteem is mutual. After the dinner you will confer great honor on him by accepting his daughter. A light-complexioned grandson is the finest gift you can leave behind, failing which the least you can do is accord his child the conceit of reminding some poor native for the rest of his life that their union is really a *mésalliance*, since her previous consort was a *ferengie*.

Leaving the Middle East and approaching Europe, the perfect cosmopolite must make other readjustments. Before anything else, he must be all things to all people. The campus philosophy of rugged individualism has produced only a rather offensive youth that any parent of discernment would have chained out in the doghouse long ago.

So in Europe bear in mind: A gentleman is judged by his French, a general by his defeats, a lawyer by his clients, and a lady by her looks. A beautiful woman has no age, race, past, class, nationality, color, creed.

Whereas in America a man is not respectable unless he runs off to an office in the morning, grabs a quick bite at noon, and then gets back to immolate his glorious youth on the altar of the Moloch of commerce from one to five-thirty, by the European code you can spend all day seeing how high you can pile saucers on sidewalk-café tables if you want to and no one will say anything.

After the last war Monte Carlo and the French Riviera became the Mecca of war profiteers' divorced wives; beautiful young widows with insurance money they had counted on or inheritances they never expected to receive, from men they had loved deeply or married after a champagne party just before the transport sailed.

There were great opportunities here for young men with glib tongues whose talents were in their feet. In a world suddenly depopulated of men, all women seemed to want was to forget.

Considering the global aspect of the last war the field ought to be just ten times as large for today's G.I. of enterprise and imagination, unless he kills four years mastering such impractical things as mining and engineering, by which time all the good jobs will have been filled, probably he will never again have the price of the necessary wardrobe and a ticket to get him there, and he will be too old to learn to bow from the waist and kiss a lady's hand and say, "À votre service, Madame," in any case.

I am indebted to a charming sixty-five-year-old count for my education in the code of continental society, a code which dates back to the Crusades and has made no compromise with honor.

As an experiment, we decided to see for ourselves whether it was cheaper to rent an apartment or live as house guests, and discovered that if a man has any choice in the matter it is better to rent the apartment and be done with it; otherwise the aspirant to security must go through a rigorous course of instruction to acquaint himself with the obligations of gentleman and guest.

"Never forget." (Continued on page 148)



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the old Frenchman impressed on me, "these meals, boring teas, and mediocre wines must be paid for in one way or another.

"A man of my age pays for his hospitality by being dignified, distinguished, and gravely nodding, 'You are quite right, Madame; I have always thought so, too,' to any observation she makes, no matter how foolish.

"A guest of forty fulfills his obligations by having a new story and a front of false amiability every time he comes to the table.

"But with a lad of your age it is incumbent that he try to seduce his hostess. This implies no disrespect, mind you. It is only a subtle courtesy which costs nothing, and is the nicest compliment you can pay her. Whether she accepts your attentions or allows herself the hollow gratification of feeling virtuous (than which there is no memory less pleasant to look back upon) it will give her such a nice feeling in any event.

"If she refuses you, we leave on Monday morning with the other guests, you looking fittingly unhappy. Believe me, even that will be a better gift than a brooch. If she accepts you we stay on until the food starts falling off or the servants get insolent, for they will detect a change in her first.

"Also remember that the pan-

try is filled with intrigue. Servants have their own ways of undermining you and getting someone else in if you do not overtip as a form of insurance; this precludes any possibility of doing the daily marketing—with the idea of overcharging and withholding change, as a means of acquiring said *pourboire* funds and the daily bouquet for your hostess. That is their concession and your only way of meeting your expenses is by paying the checks for her in tearooms, cocktail bars, restaurants, and casinos when you are out, a tenderness which enables you to raise the addition just enough to let her pay for her own flowers, and to eut down on the waiters' tips enough to placate the maitre d'hotel and cook at home. What it amounts to in the servants' case is, they are simply dividing their gratuities, and as they are generally communists anyway they should not complain. Your hostess, on the other hand, likes a guest who is ever ready to go out teating, dancing, or gambling, so everyone is happy."

But let not the young American think there are no moral obligations in this social system for him. Naturally, in the small confines of a coast that stretches to all intents and purposes only from Monte Carlo to Cannes, where all the

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servants are cousins, and matrons confide the most intimate details of their private lives over cocktails to the world in general, and where the people you meet here today are the ones you are going to run onto in Paris or Cairo or Biarritz in three months, everyone is going to know of your new relationship within a week. This places the reputation of a lady completely in your hands. She cannot be changing tame house guests every week, since permanency more or less gives the relationship respectability; it is therefore one of the unwritten laws of cultured society that when a gentleman has seduced a lady he must continue for at least six months out of politeness.

If he has a philandering streak in him and has to get it out of his system, let him take a trip. On it let him remember that any lady worth meeting won't be won by a shrill whistle, reflections on her ankles, or a G.I. leer. A bow accompanied by, "Will you do me the honor, Madame?" at apéritif time may pay sixty per cent results; but never insist if the answer is no. This last is where the American has hurt himself most in the eyes of the cultured foreigner.

The French have the saying: "A worthless man is irresistible to a good woman," but his manners still have to be impeccable. Only men with a damn good bank account and a reputation for reliability can afford to be gauche.

If the French belief that a worthless man is irresistible to a good woman is true it therefore follows that the reverse should also be the case. Your ideal, worthless man should only be attracted to good women, an assumption I subscribe to thoroughly. You never find a bounder like myself being caught by a bad woman. We like ladies, gracious and regal and well-groomed; clothed, coiffured, and manicured accordingly; the sort included in the forty per cent to whom a bow and the most courteous apéritif invitation is no substitute for presentation and a reliable sponsor. But suppose you are on a ship, in a café, dining car, or train, and there is no mutual acquaintance or approachable elderly lady in sight on whom to apply the theory that all the world loves a lover.

It is no longer a matter of strategy; you are up against pure tactics now, and whatever technique you work out, be it the boyishness of a big, brown-eyed Texan or the deep sadness of an inconsolable Russian, it must be to the pattern of your own nature.

In the case of a young French nobleman, which we might cite as an example, the solution was a ponderous Russian watch, a key-winder found in a pawn shop, with *Za olichnouyu strilbu*, "for excellent shooting ability," on its silver case and a miniature of the czar and czarina inside. It has been a regimental sharpshooter's prize at some long past spring maneuvers, when to some boy, probably dead these many years, the proudest

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Famous Queens

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Tourist's Perfect Handbook

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thing in life was praise from his emperor for shooting a gun.

One can only imagine how many times it changed hands on the end of a greasy string, from a dead man's pocket to a live one's, and the road down, into and out of pawn shops for flophouse money and vodka. Pawn-shop trips in the end are inevitably one-way and one day it did not return.

Its fifteen-jeweled, handmade works by Tobias kept perfect time till its predeceous new owner dropped it on a ship's deck, after which it ticked as long as it remained in a horizontal position and stopped as soon as it was placed upright in a pocket.

After a week or two he would not have had that watch repaired for anything. Once he had selected the lady whose acquaintance he wished to make and had casually edged into her proximity, he could safely pull out his watch in the certainty that it needed setting.

Carefully, deliberately, as befitted a conservative young gentleman reared in the traditions of the old school, he would open the heavy back of the case, insert the key that must originally have been designed for a dungeon or a wine cellar, and, exposing the face with its two miniatures, begin turning the hands.

By now both the quarry and anyone else in the vicinity were watching with interest. He would stop, look around in search of a clock, and then in a most abstract manner that implied no interest at all in her, say: "Pardon, Madame, but can you tell me the hour?"

No lady who is well-bred enough to snub an *apéritif* inviter can refuse to give a gentleman of her own class the time. From then on, depending on a snap judgment of her knowledge of history and Russian czars, followed a story that ranged anywhere from Austerlitz to Plevna, lingering on the hallmark in the hammered ease and gradually working toward a hotel, stateroom, or bar.

These are things thousands of simple boys, condemned by environment and educational system to become lowly sergeants, might have been doing in the haleyon days from 1929 to '40, along the path from Paris to Juanles-Pins and Biarritz to Bueharest that has been worn smooth by the Rolls-Royces of pilgrims; and who can say they would be wrong? Instead of slogging it out from Normandy to the Bulge we would have had just that many more fluent OSS lieutenant-colonels with diplomas from the finest school in the world: Hard Knocks College and the American Hospital in Paris, to serve us in our hour of need.

It is enough to break the heart of a man of fire and imagination, the woeful lack of spirit in the young American of today. #

Continued from page 98

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McKAY

Open letter
to Every Man
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Advice to
Unfaithful Husbands
by Helen Laurenson—Author of LATINS ARE LOUSY LOVERS



Do You Brush Your Teeth?

We've just completed a reader survey, and you may read some of the results in the editorial on the next page. We happen to think that the score adds up pretty happily for Esquire, since this survey actually was conducted under conditions permitting every respondent to speak his mind, and if the worst was coming our way, we went right out into the open asking for it.

But you'll want to find out for yourself what our typical Esquire reader is, by reading the editorial, so we won't dwell on that any further in this space. It did seem, though, if we ever were to match the statistics of our survey to the averages of the U.S. Census, that Mr. Esquire would shape up as an exceptionally competent and successful man in this exacting society of ours.

Our chief thanks are not to this happy circumstance (which is, after all, the accumulative accomplishment of all our years of publishing to meet certain standards of taste), but to the individuals who answered our questions so freely and generously. One of the pleasures of reading mail marked "Esquire" has always been the personal and familiar feeling our readers have for Esqy. When we come in for criticism—and believe me, the weather is pretty rough sometimes—we get such a blast as an irate top sergeant gives his small fry kid brother to finish the whole subject off once and for all, and get back to being a family again. When we get kidded, we have to hold on to our pants. And when we are praised, we get it with a lavish sentiment which only Esqy seems to arouse in the minds of a public well read in every type of publication. To all of you, then, who took the time to tell us something about yourselves and how you feel about Esqy, our most sincere appreciation. This magazine has reiterated time and again a policy of flexibility and change—we have the right readers, we know: our aim is to change and build Esquire until it represents everything our readers could ask. —D.A.S.

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